

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In accordance with the provisions of the Massachusetts General laws, Chapter 30A, Section 20, notice is hereby given for the following meeting of the:

***Arlington School Committee
Curriculum Instruction Accountability and Assessment
Friday, June 14, 2024
5:30 PM***

Conducted by Remote Participation <https://www.mass.gov/doc/order-suspending-certain-provision-of-open-meeting-law/download>

Via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89762700457>

In Person:

*Arlington Public Schools District Office
14 Mill Brook Drive, Superintendent's Office, 2nd Floor
Arlington, MA 02476*

Open Meeting (J. Morgan)

AHS Program of Studies

- *Memo_Thielman_CIAA_History Curriculum_20240528*

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- *Meeting Minutes - 1.10.24*
- *Meeting Minutes - 3.18.24*
- *Meeting Minutes - 5.23.24*

Adjournment (J. Morgan)

The listings of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair, which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

Stated times and time amounts, listed in parenthesis, are the estimated amount of time for that particular agenda item. Actual times may be shorter or longer depending on the time needed to fully explore the topic.

Submitted by Jane Morgan, Chair

Massachusetts law requires all open session meetings of public bodies to be accessible to members of the public, including those with disabilities. If you need reasonable accommodations in order to participate in the meeting, contact the Administrative Assistant to the Arlington School Committee Liz

Diggins at ediggins@arlington.k12.ma.us.



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Meeting Location - Hybrid

Summary:

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Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Open Meeting (J. Morgan)



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

AHS Program of Studies

Summary:

- Memo_Thielman_CIAA_History Curriculum_20240528

ATTACHMENTS:

Type	File Name	Description
▯	Correspondence Memo_Thielman_CIAA_History_Curriculum_20240528.pdf	Memo_Thielman_CIAA_History Curriculum_20240528

May 28, 2024

Hi Jane:

As discussed with Dr. Homan, I write to ask that the Curriculum, Instruction, Accountability, and Assessment (CIAA) subcommittee discuss the School Committee's approval of the History and Social Studies requirements included in the 2024-25 Program of Studies for Arlington High School, which the committee adopted in January of 2024. I hope you can address this matter at the next CIAA subcommittee meeting.

Since the School Committee approved the 2024-25 Program of Studies, students have enrolled in courses for next year, and it is not appropriate for the Committee to change course requirements at this time. However, it is important that the School Committee a) understand why it was not given information for the change in the History and Social Studies requirements in the district's presentation prior to the adoption of the Program of Studies, b) learn from the school's and the district's leadership about why the curriculum change was made (including a rationale that overcomes any objections to the change), and c) ask district leadership to outline a process to ensure the School Committee has a full picture of all curriculum changes before voting on the APS Program of Studies for 2025-26 and future years.

School Committee Authority

It may be helpful to summarize the School Committee's authority regarding curriculum adoption and graduation requirements.

1. [Policy IGD](#) reads: "The Committee will be informed of all new courses and substantive revisions in curricula that are under consideration. The School Committee's acceptance of the high school program of studies, including a listing of courses, will constitute its adoption of the high school curriculum for official purposes." Each year the principal and other members of the AHS leadership present changes in the curriculum prior to the School Committee taking a vote. In addition to complying with policy, the process ensures there is public conversation about new programs and requirements. The changes are always identified in the documents presented to us prior to the meeting.
2. Additionally, the School Committee approves graduation requirements for the Arlington Public Schools. Please see [Policy IKF](#): "In order to graduate from Arlington High School, a student must have completed the course of studies articulated in the student handbook and approved by the School Committee annually." When the district wishes to modify requirements for graduation, including giving students the option to take one course rather than another in a required course of studies for graduation, the School Committee must approve the change.
3. While state law ([MGL c 71 sec. 2](#)) requires that students be provided instruction in American history and civics at some point in their high school career, DESE does not have any formal guidance on what courses fulfill this requirement. The [MassCore - College, Career and Technical Education](#) recommendations lay out a program of study aligned with college and workforce expectations. Course completion requirements to graduate are determined by local School Committees.

Vote on the 2024-25 Program of Studies

Below is the process the School Committee undertook to approve the 2024-25 program of studies.

4. The School Committee discussed the 2024-25 Program of Studies at a School Committee meeting on January 25. The agenda includes [the presentation to the School Committee and the proposed 2024-25 AHS Program of Studies](#).
5. A review of the 2023-24 Arlington High School Program of Studies and the 2024-25 AHS Program of Studies shows a change in courses students can take to satisfy the district's History and Social Studies requirements for graduation:
 - a. The 2023-24 Program of Studies states: **"All students must take and pass Modern World History and United States History 1 and 2 in order to graduate from Arlington High School. AP US History may take the place of United States History 2."**
 - b. The 2024-25 Program of Studies adds an additional course option, AP African American Studies, to satisfy the history requirement: **"All students must take and pass Modern World History and United States History 1 and 2 in order to graduate from Arlington High School. AP US History or AP African American Studies may take the place of United States History 2."**
6. Dr. Janger's [presentation](#) did not include a description of the option to take African American Studies instead of U.S. History 2, and there does not appear to be any discussion of the change in the [video of the meeting](#). The School Committee voted to approve the Program of Studies, which included the new language, and the vote is recorded in the [minutes of the January 25, 2024 School Committee meeting](#). (I made the motion).

Vote to approve AP African American Studies

The School Committee unanimously and enthusiastically supported the addition of the AP African American studies course to the Program of Studies for the 2023-24 school year.

7. At the School Committee meeting on [January 26, 2023](#), the committee heard a presentation from Dr. Janger on new courses for the 2023-24 school year, including AP African American Studies. (I cannot find minutes of that meeting online, but I believe we approved the program of studies that evening, including the new AP African American studies class).

Massachusetts History and Social Science Frameworks: implementation in Arlington

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) frameworks, including the [History and Social Science frameworks](#), inform courses and curriculum developed at the local level. District leaders have flexibility in designing courses that are presented for approval to local school committees. The Arlington School Committee has a long tradition of approving the district's curriculum changes after receiving a detailed explanation for a new initiative and understanding how a change fits within the frameworks.

For reference, the appendix includes the district's required history courses, brief descriptions, and associated curriculum frameworks.

Next Steps

I assume the district has valid reasons for the change in history requirements for graduation. However, to my knowledge, the School Committee has not discussed the change in detail, which opens the district and broader community discussions to rumor, potentially false assumptions, and misinformation.

I am not asking that we redo the vote and change the history requirements for the 2024-25 school year, and I acknowledge that with School Committee approval, the district can offer students the option of taking different courses to satisfy the history graduation requirements.

To reiterate, I have three questions that I respectfully request be answered by district leadership at or before the next CIAA subcommittee meeting:

1. Why was the School Committee not given information for the change in the History and Social Studies requirements in the presentation and materials submitted prior to the January 2024 vote on the APS Program of Studies?
2. Why was the change in the curriculum and graduation requirement made? It will be helpful to understand both the reasons for providing this option as well as a rationale to overcome any likely or known objections to this change.
3. What steps will the district take to ensure the School Committee has a full picture of curriculum changes before voting on the Program of Studies for 2025-26 and future years?

Please reach out with questions and thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,
Jeff Thielman
Member, Arlington School Committee

Appendix

Below is a summary of AHS's required history courses, which have been approved by the School Committee, and a summary of DESE's content standards for each subject. The purpose is to have a point of reference for the subcommittee's discussion.

1. Arlington has a **Modern World history** requirement.
 - a. The DESE content standards for World History I include: a) interactions among different regions of the world, b) development of religions and systems of belief, c) interactions of kingdoms and empires (1000-1500 CE), d) philosophy, e) global exploration, conquest, and colonization (c. 1492-1800 CE), and f) philosophies of government (c. 1500 – 1800 CE).
 - b. The DESE content standards for World History II include: a) absolute power, political revolutions, and the growth of nation states (1700-1900), b) the agricultural and industrial revolutions and their consequences (1750-1900), c) the global effects of 19th century imperialism, d) the Great Wars (1914-1945), e) the Cold War Era (1945-1991), f) the era of globalization (1991 to present), and g) the politics of difference: conflicts, genocide, and terrorism.
 - c. AHS created a **Modern World History** requirement for graduation.
 - i. The course designed by the district and approved by the School Committee includes many content standards from World History II.
 - ii. The course description states: "In this course, students study major historical events that have created and impacted the world in which we live today. Students will begin with a study of key events from the first half of the twentieth century such as World War I, the interwar years, World War II, modern economic systems, globalization, and international organizations. Students will also study units on the modern Middle East, modern Russia, Latin America, and colonization and post-colonization in Africa. We will also incorporate discussions of current events that connect to eras of the past."
2. Arlington has a **U.S. History I** requirement.
 - a. DESE lists these content standards for U.S. History 1: a) Origins of the Revolution and the Constitution, b) Democratization and expansion, c) economic growth in the North, South, and West, d) social, political, and religious change, e) the Civil War and Reconstruction, f) rebuilding the United States: immigration and industry, f) progressivism and World War I.
 - b. Per its course description, Arlington's **U.S. History I** course: "asks students to study the historical foundations of America and make connections to how the U.S. became the country that it is today. This is done in order to help students become more informed citizens of the country they live in. Students will examine Indigenous history, the establishment of race in North America, the 13 Colonies, American Revolution, U.S. Constitution, early American presidencies, the Civil War and Reconstruction. Throughout their study of early U.S. history, students will consider recurring political, social, economic, military, and cultural themes through diverse perspectives."
3. Arlington has a **U.S. History II** requirement, which per the 2024-25 Program of Studies, may be substituted by **AP US History** or **AP African American Studies**.
 - a. DESE lists these content standards for U.S. History II: a) the role of economics in modern U.S. history, b) modernity in the U.S.: ideologies and economies, c)

- defending democracy: responses to fascism and communism, d) defending democracy: the Cold War and civil rights at home, e) U.S. and globalization.
- b. The course description for AHS's **U.S. History II** course, includes many DESE content standards: "In United States History 2, students will study . . . immigration, industrialization and urbanization, American imperialism, Progressivism, World War 1, the Great Depression, World War 2, the Cold War, the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War and contemporary events in U.S. history. Major themes in this course include American foreign policy, government involvement in peoples' lives (domestic policy), protest/change, as well as the experiences of historically marginalized groups in U.S. history."
 - c. Arlington's **Advancement Placement U.S. History** course has the following description: "The AP US History course focuses on developing student's understanding of American history from approximately 1491 to the present. The course has students investigate the content of US history for significant events, individuals, developments, and processes in nine historical periods and develop and use the same thinking skills and methods (analyzing primary and secondary sources, making historical comparisons, chronological reasoning, and argumentation) employed by historians when they study the past. The course also provides seven themes (American and national identity; migration and settlement; politics and power; work, exchange, and technology; America in the world; geography and the environment; and culture and society) that students explore throughout the course in order to make connections among historical developments in different times and places. AP US History is designed to be the equivalent of a two-semester introductory college or university US history course. Students selecting the AP US History course must take the College Board AP US History exam in May in order to receive AP credit for the class."
 - d. Arlington's **AP African American Studies** course has this description: "The interdisciplinary course includes study in a variety of disciplines—literature, the arts, humanities, political science, geography, and science. This approach will allow students to explore the vital contributions and experiences of African Americans. Students will study topics including the African Diaspora, enslavement and resistance, the practice of freedom, and liberatory movements. AP African American Studies is designed to be the equivalent of a two-semester introductory college or university African American Studies course."



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Summary:

- Meeting Minutes - 1.10.24
- Meeting Minutes - 3.18.24
- Meeting Minutes - 5.23.24

ATTACHMENTS:

Type	File Name	Description
▢ Minutes	1.10.24_-_Google_Docs.pdf	Meeting Minutes - January 10, 2024
▢ Minutes	3.18.24_-_Google_Docs.pdf	Meeting Minutes - March 18, 2024
▢ Minutes	5.23.24_-_Google_Docs.pdf	Meeting Minutes - May 23, 2024

Arlington School Committee
Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Accountability Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 10, 2024 @ 2:00 p.m.
DRAFT

Attendance

Subcommittee Members: Jane Morgan (Chair), Liz Exton, Len Kardon

School Committee Members: Laura Gitelson

District Leadership: Liz Homan (Superintendent), Mona Ford-Walker (Deputy Superintendent)

Community members: Ann Weissman

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

Meeting minute approval

The 10/23/23 meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Student Support Teams

- Dr. Ford-Walker provided an update on her review of APS implementation of SSTs.
- Needs: Data management system needed, stipends for out of school time meetings
- SSTs are unevenly implemented across schools, one school does not do SSTs
- Dr. Ford-Walker plans to revisit SSTs with the subcommittee early during the 24-25 school year.

Meeting agenda item requests.

- Len Kardon requested that the CIAA subcommittee hear from curriculum directors throughout the year since we do not hear from them as often in full committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Arlington School Committee
Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Accountability Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 18, 2024 @ 2:00 p.m.
DRAFT

Attendance

Subcommittee Members: Jane Morgan (Chair), Liz Exton, Len Kardon

District Leadership: Liz Homan (Superintendent), Mona Ford-Walker (Deputy Superintendent), Dawn Carney, Octavia Brauner

Community members: Ann Weissman

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

Curriculum Directors

- World Languages department head Dawn Carney provided a presentation about the World Language department. The slides are in Novus. Committee members asked questions about co-taught foreign language classes and the transition to choosing a language in grade six.
- Math and Computer Science department head Octavia Brauner provided a presentation about the Math and Computer Science department. The slides are in Novus. Committee members asked questions about the middle school math sequencing plans, support for students who struggle with middle school math, opportunities for extension work for elementary students during WIN block, and Algebra 1 requirements for honors conceptual physics in grade 9.

Professional Development Update

- Dr. Ford-Walker provided an update on the process for approving professional development for faculty. She indicated that all requests must be submitted and approved by her office. She is particularly interested in maximizing the time that teachers are in front of students and wants to carefully evaluate professional development that takes teachers out of the classroom. She has spoken with both department heads and the high school principal about the expectation for practice moving forward.

Literacy Screener Update

- Liz Exton and Len Kardon provided feedback on the exemplar literacy screener messages especially related to how families are offered a meeting for their students who are substantially below benchmark. Dr. Ford-Walker indicated that additional edits will be done and they expect a more consistent response across elementary schools during the 24-25 school year.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Arlington School Committee
Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Accountability Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 23, 2024 @ 2:15 p.m.
DRAFT

Attendance

Subcommittee Members: Jane Morgan (Chair), Liz Exton, Len Kardon

School Committee Members: Laura Gitelson , Paul Schlichtman

District Leadership: Liz Homan (Superintendent), Mona Ford-Walker (Deputy Superintendent)

Community members: none

The meeting was called to order at 2:15 p.m.

24-25 District Goals

- The subcommittee reviewed and provided feedback on the draft district goals as presented. Suggestions will be incorporated into the goals that will be shared with the full committee at the next meeting.

Future Agenda Items

- Jane Morgan indicated that, moving forward, the plan for the AHS Program of Studies would be to review it at CIAA in advance of bringing it to the full committee. She requested that the administration provide the committee with a red-lined copy of the document for review. The Superintendent agreed with the recommendation.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Adjournment (J. Morgan)



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Submitted by Jane Morgan, Chair